

Responses to Questions received regarding RFP NIFL-02-R-0001

- 1) *What is the congressional authorization for the National Study? Is there information posted/published in addition to the Presolicitation Notice?*

The No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 authorizes the National Institute for Literacy, in collaboration with Secretary of Education, the Secretary of Health and Human Services, and the Director of the National Institute for Child Health and Human Services to disseminate information on scientifically-based reading research pertaining to children, youth, and adults. As part of that dissemination effort the NIFL is required to support the continued identification and dissemination on reading programs that contain the essential components of reading instruction as supported by the scientifically based reading research, that can lead to improved reading outcomes for children, youth, and adults.

- 2) *What is the availability of funds, and what is the projected funding level? There does not seem to be a suggested bid range. What guidance can you give us on this matter? Is there a "not to exceed" threshold?*

Funding is currently available for this requirement. Offerors are requested to submit their best offers. The Government has prepared its own independent cost estimate, but does not share that information with those outside of Government. The Government anticipates issuing a cost-plus award fee contract to the contractor selected on a combination of factors, including quality and cost.

- 3) *What is the projected length of the study? How long will the contract go for and approximately when will it begin? What is the schedule from 3/15/02, the RFP closing date, through the contract award and availability of funds to begin implementation of the study?*

The Government anticipates awarding the contract in early May 2002 and expects work on the main task, the review of reading programs, to be completed by July 2002. The performance period for the optional tasks will be determined at the time that the Government exercises those options.

- 4) *If I am reading the synopsis correctly, it states that it is a "theoretical" study for establishing a process, identifying the programs to be assessed, conducting the assessment, and reviewing and analyzing evaluation and other research reports about the effectiveness of programs, and finally, the above assessment tasks shall be carried out through an expert review panel that.... That is where I am lost.... How will the above assessment of tasks be carried out through an expert review panel?*

This is not a theoretical study. The requirement is for planning, conducting, and reporting the results of an analysis of the content and effectiveness of programs for teaching reading. The Contractor is required to work with an expert panel, composed of individuals with the appropriate expertise and training that will conduct the analysis of programs that are selected for review. The Contractor is expected to establish the panel, provide logistical support for the panel's operation, and to ensure that the panel carries out its duties in a timely manner.

- 5) *How is the term "teaching reading" defined? What age levels? What reading levels (can study include primary level or remedial level or both?))? And, what methodology types can be included? Are there procedural requirements for how selections are made?*

The solicitation does not use "teaching reading" as a term of art. The required review will

include programs that are used by educators of children in kindergarten through grade 3. Task I in the statement of work requires the contractor to develop criteria and a process for identifying and selecting programs for review.

- 6) *Is this bid for a specific group of businesses other than a small business entity? Such as disadvantaged or for certain ethnic groups?*  
This competition is open to all responsible and qualified sources.
- 7) *What are "responsible and qualified sources?"*  
Responsible and qualified sources include any qualified applicants who meet the criteria set out in the RFP.
- 8) *Does this RFP call for the documentation of numbers and practices of literacy programs?*  
The review for which we are seeking a contractor will be designed to determine whether existing programs are research-based, that is, an objective review of the instructional content and approach of reading programs/curricula currently in use. We are not seeking to document the numbers or different types of programs, though such information would be useful.
- 9) *How will the planning, conducting and reporting of the results of an analysis on the content and effectiveness of the most widely used programs for teaching reading be accomplished? Is this a theoretical investigation or a practical one? Or is it both?* This is not a theoretical investigation. Please see the statement of work for an explanation of how the requirements for planning the review and reporting the results.
- 10) *When you state in the synopsis that the "above assessment tasks shall be carried out through an expert review panel that includes researchers in reading and instructional design and researchers recognized for their work in early reading development", who is to make-up this panel (i.e. specifically, their names, and how many?) Are they going to be located within Washington D.C.? What types of expertise in the area of reading and literacy does the Department want to see represented? What is the anticipated role of the expert review panel and how is it selected? If awarded the contract, will I specifically work directly with this panel throughout the contract? Does the contractor select the panel?*  
The Contractor is required to establish an expert panel composed of individuals who have been nationally-recognized for their knowledge of the scientific research on reading, for their contributions to that knowledge, or who have experience in designing and implementing reading programs that are grounded in the scientific research. This expert panel will perform the analysis of the content and data on effectiveness of the programs selected for review. The Contractor will select the individuals who compose this expert panel, but panelists must be approved by the National Institute for Literacy. The NIFL expects the Contractor to work with the panel to conduct the review of the programs. The role of the review panel is identified within the Statement of Work (Attachment A).
- 11) *Where will the research for this contract be conducted? Will this contract involve any travel? If travel is involved, should that also be implemented in the budget part of the contract? Approximately how much travel is involved in this contract?*  
This contract may require travel. If the offeror has identified the need for travel, appropriate information regarding travel should be included in the offeror's cost proposal.

Travel shall be reimbursed at cost. Contractors must be able to explain cost estimates for travel and shall try to obtain the best prices possible for travel-related expenses.

12) *Do you have a model school set-up in D.C. or elsewhere?*

No model school has been set up or identified in D.C. or elsewhere.

13) *What is expectation for study implementation? Should the contractor plan for implementation?*

The Contractor is expected to plan and carry out the review.

14) *What is the timing for identification and selection of experts?*

The schedule of deliverables is identified within the Statement of Work (see Attachment A).

15) *It would appear from looking through the SOW and other attachments that we should bid the proposal using our negotiated indirect cost rate. Right?*

Yes.

16) *Is there a difference between the FedBiz information than the written RFP?*

Any inconsistency between the original printed document and the disk or electronic document shall be resolved by giving precedence to the printed document. The RFP is the legal printed document and any contradictions between the actual RFP and the FedBizOpps notice shall be addressed legally complying with the actual RFP terms and conditions. Please remember that FedBizOpps is only the announcement of the Government's intent to issue the RFP. It may of course include information regarding that RFP but the actual legal document is the printed RFP.

17) *What is the difference between the Evaluation Factors noted in Section M and Attachment E?*

Please note Section M in accordance to the uniform Contract Format contains all of the evaluation factors for award. Note that Attachment E supplements these evaluation factors in Section M but is in fact a part of the evaluation criteria in Section M. Do not interpret Attachment E as an additional requirement; it is in fact a part of the Evaluation factors described in Section M and is not a separate section in and of itself and an Attachment to Section M.